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—Edward W. O'Rourke

THE

Commonweal

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by Michael P. Fogarty

THE DECLINE OF RADICALISM

by John Stanley

NATHANAEL WEST'S HOLY FOOL

by Arthur Cohen

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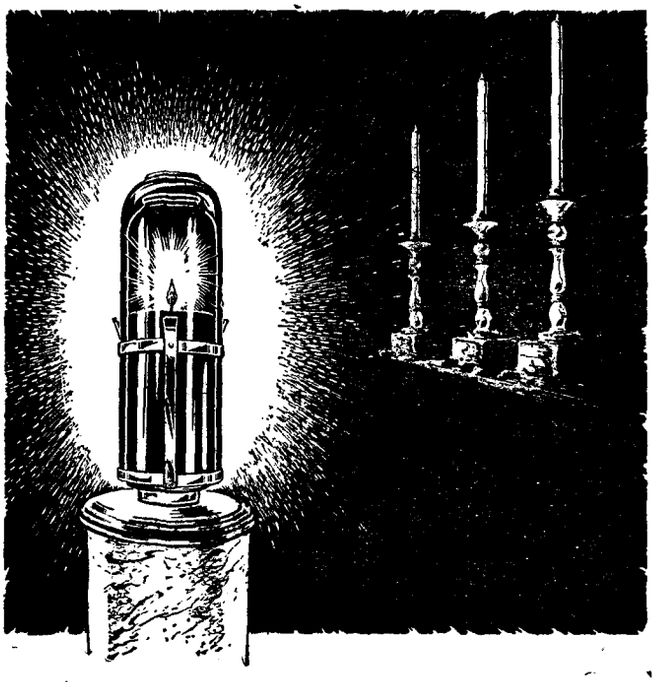

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SECOND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

NEUTRALISM IN WISCONSIN

IN WISCONSIN, President Eisenhower is facing a revolt of the immoderates. When the GOP state convention refused to endorse Senator Wiley for renomination, it did much more than repudiate Wisconsin's senior Senator; it also disowned the basic foreign policy of the Eisenhower Administration. And it raised serious questions about the future of the Republican Party.

Senator Wiley has been one of the Administration's leading spokesmen in the field of foreign policy. Originally an isolationist and suspicious of all "foreign entanglements," he emerged from World War II a committed supporter of the internationalist foreign policy America has followed for the last eleven years. When the Republicans controlled the Congress, Senator Wiley was chairman of the potent Foreign Relations Committee; he is now the ranking Republican member. In both capacities he has served the Eisenhower Administration well, and his voice was doubly necessary because the official Party spokesman, Senator Knowland, himself differed so strongly with the President on key issues of foreign policy.

Inside the Wisconsin GOP, Senator Wiley has long been opposed by isolationist, McCarthy-loving forces. They cannot forgive him for his internationalist views, for opposing the Bricker Amendment, which would reduce the powers of the President in the conduct of foreign affairs, and for refusing to defend Senator McCarthy against censure by the Senate. At the recent convention, the enthusiasm that greeted platform denunciations of the mutual security program as a "give-away program by Uncle Sap" illustrated the spirit of the Republican organization in Wisconsin. That persons with such views should oppose Senator Wiley is not surprising; what is surprising is that anyone should consider these people pro-Eisenhower.

What has to be taken into account here is that President Eisenhower himself is something of a political anomaly. The Republican state convention in Wisconsin would probably have found Candidate Eisenhower in 1952 much more to their liking than is President Eisenhower in 1956, for in 1952 Mr. Eisenhower waged a campaign that was essentially negative in character. Perhaps in 1956 the Wisconsin GOP even feels it has been betrayed by the President. In this we think they are wrong. For it has become increasingly clear in the last four years that for President Eisenhower language is simply not a precise instrument. He has an uncanny, if unconscious, genius for swaddling important ideas in language that is impossible to parse. If in the same informal talk he sounds like an isolationist to the isolationists and like an internationalist to the internationalists, it has become clear in the last four years that this dual effect usually stems not from design but from a real difficulty in expressing his meaning.

NO MATTER what the Wisconsin GOP or anybody else thinks he meant in 1952, President Eisenhower today clearly sees his role as that of the man who will re-shape the Republican Party. There are even reports that he seriously considered starting a third party when the Republican Congress frustrated him during his first two years in office. He is convinced that the national interest and world peace require mutual security arrangements with our allies, economic aid to the underdeveloped countries, and full cooperation with international organizations. He wants to change the image of the Republican Party, from that of isolationism, hyper-nationalism, and a stubborn resistance to change, to one of enlightened con-

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servatism. He stands, in his own mind and in the minds of millions of Americans, for moderation, and he wants the Republican Party to do likewise.

In the course President Eisenhower is following, there are certain undeniable dangers. There are historical situations in which the greatest national needs are calm and moderation. But in other eras the middle-of-the-road can be disastrous, since some situations require more than a compromise in the middle; "too little, too late" is the classic judgment of history on a middle-of-the-road approach to a crucial world situation.

But whatever the perils involved in thinking that a middle position, mechanically conceived, is always right, President Eisenhower sees his task as that of molding the Republican Party in a new image of moderation after twenty bitter, out-of-power years. How far his task is from completion is revealed by the gap between his great personal popularity and that of the Republican Party—as indicated by Democratic victories in elections since 1952 and public opinion polls—and by incidents like the recent disavowal of his policies by the Wisconsin Republican convention.

Now the key question is: what can and will Mr. Eisenhower do to help Senator Wiley, who must run in the primary without organization support or money? Aiding Senator Wiley will not be easy, and yet something will surely have to be done. If Senator Wiley is defeated, the President could, perhaps, send him to join Senator George as another special delegate to NATO, but there must be some limit to such face-saving jobs, even if it is only a numerical one. And if Republican leaders in Congress are defeated by local GOP organizations precisely because they support President Eisenhower, the Administration will surely be in serious trouble.

NEXT WEEK

GEORGE LORIMER writes about the Christian Democrats and the program of land reform in Italy.

"One cannot but be impressed by the transformation which has occurred in this once rough and rugged terrain. . . . It seemed reasonable to believe that the farmer who owned his farm thanks to the Christian Democrats would show his gratitude by giving his vote to that party. This has not happened, and one wonders why."

NEW APPROACH TO FOREIGN AID

ONCE AGAIN a challenge by the Communists is causing the democracies to re-examine certain ways of doing things. This time it is the Soviet economico-political success with the underdeveloped countries. A growing conviction is that, although sums allotted for material aid and all sorts of technical assistance have remained too small, red tape, needless complications and, at times, corruption on the receiving end have greatly reduced the effectiveness of such subventions. There is a marked need for greater efficiency and follow-through if neglected economies, production per worker and living standards are to be built up. In this connection the International Chamber of Commerce of Paris is working on a program for Asia whereby vocational training and exchanges of technicians would be greatly increased.

German economists have come up with an even more promising suggestion. The objective would be to guarantee a badly needed stable export market for the products of the underdeveloped countries. An assured steady income would then enable local planners to establish new industries and raise living standards toward an adequate human level. The principal means of accomplishing this longer-term program would be an international fund of several billions which could be brought into action whenever demand falls below normal. Over a period of years this would cost the participating nations considerably less than the sums now expended for direct foreign aid. Presumably it would be an effective means of complementing, if not eventually of supplanting, Point Four help.

STEEL NEGOTIATIONS

THE OUTCOME of the Pittsburgh-New York negotiations this month between "Big Steel" and the United Steelworkers is awaited in many circles with more than usual interest. The early rounds of the negotiations appear to have been noteworthy for a promising lack of friction. A number of newspapers have expressed the hope that union-management harmony would be such as to prevent a strike that might hamstring other industries. Editors have also been pleading with the negotiators for moderation in making and acceding to union demands because of the inflationary influence of a big increase in steel wages and prices.

If, on account of the extensive and manifold uses of steel in the American economy, prices of

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that basic commodity affect costs in many industries, to what extent should the Steelworkers feel duty-bound to curb their demands? A lesser factor in the same category is the way the labor contract in the steel industry has come to provide a pattern for terms later agreed upon in other industrial negotiations. All these considerations build up pressures from without against the Steelworkers' effort to achieve wage increases.

Recently Joseph J. Block of Inland Steel set out for the members of the American Iron and Steel Institute certain boundaries within which, he felt, terms of agreement should be reached. One bad extreme he establishes is the steel maker who refuses to consider *any* wage increases; the other is the union which seeks to obtain substantially more than is warranted by the annual increase in productivity per worker. By keeping within these limits both parties to the negotiation would avoid damaging strikes on the one hand and serious inflationary pressure on the other. Mr. Block's formula is neat in its balance and (to some) apparent reasonableness. But in fact it assumes that the present wage-profit-executive salary relationships in that industry are ideal.

But is not ever-widening distribution of purchasing power the secret of sustained prosperity in the United States? And is not the chief means by which it has been accomplished the successful pressure of first this group and then that group for better incomes and higher living standards? In any case, the Steelworkers can hardly be expected to take over the major responsibility for warding off inflation in this country. That is hardly the basis for determining whether ultimate (rather than asking) wage demands are unreasonable or excessive in an industry in which current profits are at an all-time peak.

PROTESTANTS IN SPAIN

THE SPANISH Ministry of Information recently seized about thirty-six thousand books stored on the premises of the British and Foreign Bible Society. This society has existed in Spain since the nineteenth century and supplies the devotional books for Spain's estimated ten to twenty thousand Protestants. In this case, the government claimed that the books seized, including nine thousand copies of the New Testament and twenty thousand devotional works and commentaries on the New Testament, had been printed or imported without the required authorization.

Commenting on this seizure, the Very Reverend Zacarias de Vizcarra, writing in the Spanish magazine *Ecclesia,* supported the move by the government, because, in view of the small number of Spanish Protestants, the literature confiscated "undoubtedly was to be used for propaganda among Catholics."

In this incident, unfortunately typical of the tangled Church-State relations in Franco's Spain, several points, we feel, should be made. In view of the confusion to be found among many Americans, Catholic and non-Catholic, it is necessary to point out that the seizure of these Protestant books was the action of the Spanish government, not of the Catholic Church. The Concordat between the Holy See and Spain permits religious freedom to all, despite the fact that restrictive measures against religious minorities have often been applied with that vagueness of charge and reliance on legalism which characterize authoritarian regimes.

It may be helpful, secondly, to point out that, in giving his approval to this latest move of the Spanish government against Protestants, Bishop Vizcarra is not speaking for the entire Catholic Church, nor for Catholics everywhere, nor for the entire Spanish Hierarchy. He is voicing his personal reaction of approval given to a repressive action of the Spanish government.

And we are voicing our personal reaction when we say that we regret this and similar actions of the Franco regime which have been directed against the Protestant minority in Spain, just as we regret and oppose, for example, the two articles of the Swiss Constitution which ban activities by the Jesuits and prohibit new establishments of religious orders in Switzerland.

We realize that America is not Spain—or Switzerland—and that the principles and practices of American religious pluralism cannot be applied without great modification to such countries. Unlike these countries, America does not have the political problems offered by a "minority" religion, since the three major religious groups in the United States are alike a minority in relation to the entire population.

Nevertheless, making all due allowances for the difference between the American and Spanish religious situations and traditions, we regret that so influential a voice as that of Bishop Vizcarra has been added to the support of this latest restrictive move against Spanish Protestants. The issue involves, among other things, freedom of conscience, and trying to repress it by governmental *fiat* will

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not, in the long run, serve the best interests of the Spanish Church or the Spanish people.

MR. KEFAUVER'S CHANCES

CAMPAIGNING in California and Florida, Estes Kefauver spoke from his neon-lighted Glow Wagon to the strains of his campaign song, "Robin Hood." In these states he launched a slashing personal attack against Adlai Stevenson, and justified it by saying that such an attack was intended to "shock" the voters out of their apathy.

The results in California and Florida indicate that the apathetic voters were not particularly shocked by Mr. Kefauver's tactics, but that other important people were. Members of the regular Democratic organization disliked being constantly referred to as "bosses" by the Senator. Those anxious to cement party loyalty were dismayed by his charges that "a vote for Stevenson is a vote for Eastland, Talmadge, Ellender and the other white supremacy boys." Liberals inclined to look with favor upon Mr. Kefauver were disenchanted by his continued use against Mr. Stevenson of charges which had already been disproved. The Senator's shock tactics have injured the Democratic party, but, above all, they have injured his chances for getting the Presidential nomination.

THE SOUTHERN POINT OF VIEW

"TO LIVE anywhere in the world today and be against equality because of race or color, is like living in Alaska and being against snow. We have already got snow. And as with the Alaskan, merely to live in armistice is not enough. Like the Alaskan, we had better use it." Writing in the June issue of *Harper's,* Mr. William Faulkner thus states a truth which many of his fellow Southerners fight against accepting.

Recently, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was ordered to stop operating within Alabama. The state court issued the order at the request of Alabama's Attorney General, John Patterson, who said that the NAACP had helped organize and finance the bus boycott in Alabama, and had employed two Negro women to seek admission to the all-white University of Alabama. These actions, said the Attorney General, "are causing irreparable injury to the property and civil rights of the residents and citizens of the State of Alabama."

The NAACP denies that it organized the boycott or employed the women to enroll at the University. But there seems to be little reason that the Association should be forced to make such a denial. The actions themselves scarcely seem heinous. And they are clearly within the area defined by recent Supreme Court decisions. Only by such gradual insistence, it could reasonably be argued, will the Negro attain his true and proper stature in American life.

But aside from these fairly obvious points there is another which constantly concerns those who want to see the Negro advance as rapidly as possible but who do not wish to see violence and harm needlessly visited upon any Southerner, white or Negro. For people who do attempt to understand the "Southerner's point of view," as intransigent as it seems, a statement such as Mr. Patterson's is another obstacle to overcome. For when the Attorney General speaks of "property and civil rights" he is clearly thinking of the white "residents and citizens," not the Negro. He makes quite clear that what is meant by the "Southerner's point of view" is that of the white Southerner.

Even Mr. Faulkner, whose impassioned article is both reasonable and balanced, raises some problems when he asks, "And if the Southern white man cannot trust him [the Negro] with something as mild as equality, what is the Southern white man going to do when he has power—the power of his own fifteen millions of unanimity backed by the federal government—when the only check on the power will be that federal government which is already the Negro's ally?"

The confusion from which this question stems should be obvious. For the "power" of which Mr. Faulkner speaks is not something separate from "equality"; it is the corollary. The Negro in America will not have one until he has the other. And the Negro minority will be subject to the same claims and allegiances that divide other minorities. Nor will Negroes, as equal citizens, need or have an ally in the federal government. The specters here are imagined rather than real.

Yet Mr. Faulkner, who imagined these specters, is able to say that the apparently irreconcilable facts of Southern life are "only apparently irreconcilable, because they must be reconciled since the only alternative to change is death." When this becomes the "Southern point of view" it will be truly Southern, for it can be shared by white and Negro. And only then will the rest of the country truly understand and sympathize with the "Southern point of view."

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Realism in Foreign Policy

"HAVE THE REALISTS NOT FALLEN OVER BACKWARDS IN THEIR EFFORTS NOT TO LOOK LIKE WOODROW WILSON?"

MICHAEL P. FOGARTY

AMERICAN foreign policy, so we in Europe were brought up to believe, suffers acutely from idealism. There was Woodrow Wilson, so devoted to the League of Nations that he kept America out of it. There was Franklin Roosevelt, so suspicious of Churchill's realism that he signed away the freedom of half Europe. We see you as people who join in world wars and win them, but only after they have blazed up in all their fury; you do not cut off the temptation to war by making your power and intentions clear at the start.

Or rather that is how we used to see you, for since then the realist school, led by men like George Kennan and Hans Morgenthau, has been at work on you. And a very thorough job they have done. Pick up a Foreign Policy Association pamphlet today and you will find it full of the sort of crude, coarse, Churchillian balance-of-power doctrine which might have saved us from two world wars—the idea that, if a man is after you with a gun, the way to keep him from shooting you is to face him with another gun (or better still, with two), and to let him know it in good time. You will find it said that politics is the art of the possible, and its objectives must be clearly defined and limited in the light of political conditions both at home and abroad. Wilson's career appears as an awful warning: study it, do not imitate it. And you will hear that alliances should be based on common interests, not on friendship nor on similarity of institutions. For friendships fluctuate and constitutions change, but a common concern for defense or trade goes on.

Amen to all that. But it is just here that I begin to feel uneasy. What are these common interests, these limited and practicable objectives? Some weeks ago I heard Hans Morgenthau proclaim from the platform that America's basic interest in foreign policy at this time is still to prevent further countries from falling into Communist hands. Let there by all means be foreign aid, civilian as well as military. Let it be administered more flexibly, and with more precision in its objectives and checking on its results than in the past. But the sign under which it, and the rest of America's foreign policy, goes forth should still be that of anti-Communism; for this, and this alone, is what calls for and justifies American intervention all over the world.

AM I being naive, or have the realists in this case not fallen over backwards in their efforts not to look like Woodrow Wilson? I grant, certainly, that there are times and places when defense against the enemy is the only thing that matters. It is not so long since both Britain and America were fighting alongside the USSR, as the urgency of the battle against Nazi Germany demanded. I grant also that preparation for defense is an important part of policy at all times. Those of us who are not Americans may need in these days to be reminded of this. But the whole point of the New Look in Soviet policy is surely that at this time the danger of war has moved one step backwards, so that room is left to consider other interests as well as those of bare survival.

What other interests has America in world policy? Let me bring this question back to the more familiar field of home politics. Consider some prosperous and respected citizen, let us say an executive of some big corporation. What interest has he in the community's government? That there should be a police force, to prevent him from being murdered in his bed. That there should be some personnel managers and social workers—even if he has to hire them himself—and some social services, to prevent delinquency and buy off the class war. So far, I think Dr. Morgenthau would be with me; for this is what his anti-Communist policy would imply. But would our prosperous citizen's interest in his community really cease there? Is it not also true that he—and I mean he himself, never mind altruism at this point—has a more positive interest in his community's welfare and growth? From it he gets his material welfare, his culture, his religion, his opportunities of leadership. In all these senses he grows up with his community, and can grow in no other way, for he is a social animal as well as

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an individual. Whatever stunts the community, stunts him. No doubt he can live among the people like some robber baron or keeper of a concentration camp, anxious only to exploit them, or like some nineteenth-century industrialist interested only in his profit and loss. But what sort of life is this for him, as well as for the community? When he looks in the mirror, will he not see something less than the man he might have been had he understood how to grow up with and through his neighbors?

THAT seems to me very much America's position today among the other countries of the world. All over the world today are to be found nations and communities growing up, re-focusing their objectives, reaching out for new things, with what they seek differing from case to case.

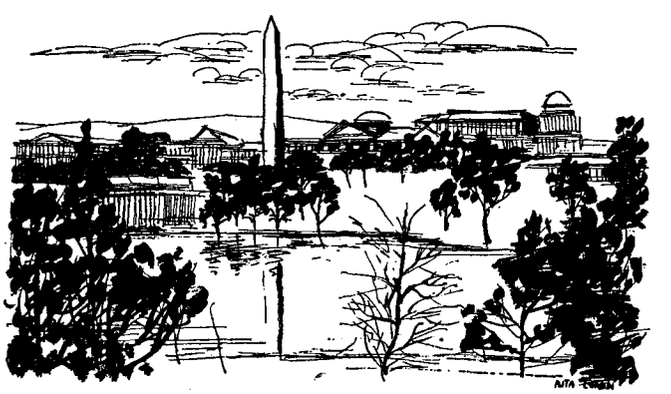
Some, like India, have a philosophy but need many kinds of material aid. In others, like many African territories, it is necessary not only to import modern technology but also to lay the entire foundations of spiritual, cultural and political principles on which even material development must rest. The advanced countries of Western Europe, especially those nations which till lately were imperial powers or had imperial ambitions, are going through a process—often a very painful one, as with France in Algeria—of re-focusing their objectives. They are slowly turning, or rather being pushed, away from their traditional Commonwealth, or French Union, or in any case world-wide perspectives, towards one in which their main interest will be seen to lie in voluntary cooperation among themselves, perhaps eventually in a United States of Europe.

All this process of growth and change contains great possibilities, not only for the countries immediately concerned, but for those which might help and guide them from outside, and notably for America. There are possibilities of trade, and America is, and will increasingly become, an importer of just those commodities, in many cases, which the countries now developing are fitted to produce. There is also the exchange of ideas. The basic work on nuclear physics was done mainly in Europe, or by scientists trained in Europe. The same has been true of many other fields of scientific and technical development. There is more to come yet from Europe, and in any case may tomorrow's lessons not come from India, or Africa?

The American religious traditions have come from Europe and the Middle East. Why not tomorrow from that movement to synthesize the best of the traditions of West and East which is symbolized by Dom Bede Griffith's initiative in India or by the Moslem studies being pursued so successfully from the Catholic side in Cairo? And as other countries grow and change there are opening up innumerable possibilities of American leadership, and therefore of growth in the stature and understanding of the leading individuals and groups. Some of these possibilities are open to the American people as such, acting through the State Department and other official agencies. Others are open to groups within America; the churches, business groups, the AFL-CIO. Others again are open simply to individual Americans who may wish to make themselves careers abroad, or to find themselves a field for service.

OBJECTIVES in this vast field, of course, need to be defined and limited, since not even America can do everything at once. But I hope I have said enough to show that, even in the most strictly realistic terms, there are objectives to define. America does have a mutual interest, not merely an interest of charity and altruism, in growing up with the rest of the world. And now, in the time of the Soviet New Look, is when this interest needs to be brought out into the open and defined.

It would help greatly in defining this interest, in underlining its importance, and in getting the right balance between these more positive objectives and the continuing objective of defense, if some limit could be set to the extent of America's pursuit of defense objectives. Recently, for example, at the Council for World Affairs forum at Cleveland, General S. L. Marshall argued that the time has come for a voluntary, unilateral gesture by the United States to put a ceiling on the atomic arms race. There are already enough bombs, he argued in effect—or at any rate there may well be, since evidently the exact information is not published—for all the legitimate purposes that bombs might serve; further H-bomb tests should therefore stop, and at some point a ceiling to research and stock-piling should be set. I am not qualified to judge this proposal from a military point of view. But I am certain that if the defense authorities of this country could feel justified in acting on it, their gesture would



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strike the rest of the world with an impact like that of the other General Marshall's proposal for aid nine years ago.

And that brings me to a final point. You cannot sell a purely defense-centered, anti-Communist American policy today either in Europe or, so far as I know, anywhere else. That is not just because we non-Americans are naive, unaware of the meaning of power politics, or looking for easy ways out—though no doubt these things play their part, too. It is because more or less clearly, often only instinctively, we see this other mutual interest in growth and development, and feel disappointed and resentful when mutual aid policies, which belong under that head, get squeezed in under defense and anti-Communism instead. We can understand military necessities and political horse-trading as well as anyone; we have a rather long tradition in these matters ourselves. But everything in its own place.

The idealistic tradition of American foreign policy did contain a valid insight. This lay in recognizing, however dimly and impractically, the common interest in growth and development which binds America to other communities in the world. Now, when the military danger has receded a little, would seem to be the time to bring this common interest into the front rank again, alongside the equally valid insight of the realists into the importance of military power politics, as one of the basic and vital concerns of American foreign policy.

"VOICES GONE DUMB"

The Decline of Radicalism

JOHN STANLEY

WHEN ONE no longer saw on the student bulletin boards of a big New York university a group of notices reading, say, "Young Marxist Study Group will meet tonight at 8:30, room 305," or, "Young Communists League Dance—stag or drag," he could know that this was the end of an era. It was once considered normal that these notices appear, and the presence of "young radicals" was considered a normal part of the student picture. The administration probably considered them a little more trouble than was the average student. Around the first of May they would always be sure that there were a few extra policemen on hand, but there was never any real difficulty.

One year, the first spring of the war, the Young Communists on my campus got a young Anglican priest to preside at an outdoor meeting on a perfectly beautiful day of that tragic season. He opened the meeting with a prayer, and made a speech urging complete non-intervention on the part of this country. Some of the students who didn't like this attitude—including the ones who were wearing "Bundles for Britain" pins—started a snake dance and chanted "We want war! We want war!" But nothing much happened. Finally, the organizers of the meeting led the thin, earnest young Englishman away, one of them carrying his step-ladder.

Such meetings, notices and scenes were the norm at the great secular universities in those hearty days. But one would feel a bit guilty today to name the universities which felt it their duty to permit this activity. The charitable thing to do in these very different days is not to embarrass these institutions and their administrations by adverting to such ancient facts of life.

But there is much to be said for those meetings and those notices, typed on rough slips of paper and tacked up by earnest young men and women—the latter usually caricatured with dark, unkempt hair and horn-rimmed glasses, and deliciously rumored as practicing "free-love" with Negroes. Those notices and meetings are seen in the memory as being in the greatest American tradition. It is all the more tragic that this nation, which has such a rich heritage, seems to have become frightened by it. It is forced to acknowledge, much against the current grain, that liberty and rebellion are part of its traditions.

OF COURSE, even in the "old days" these basic notions didn't have universal acceptance; but the ethos of the open society of fifteen years ago was much more receptive to the energetic reception of radical doctrine than is the society in which our children are nurtured today. As a nation, we have become a little timid about admitting for serious hearing a really

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healthy, virile minority opinion. A considerable number of "men in the street" would have to be canvassed before finding a quorum even to discuss, for example, the possibility of a really radical change in the government of the country. At least in the upper levels of conscious desire the nation has achieved—or is in sight of achieving—quite desirable goals; and it doesn't want this process disturbed. It is in no temper to tolerate interference with what it considers to be a steady forward march.

"The battles of the heroes of the future will be individualistic; not against the armed forces of governments but against the apathetic routine and inertia of the human masses," said Edward Carpenter, an English radical who died in 1929. There are not many heroes, nor can we *expect* the sacrifice of heroes; and much of our resources of spiritual energy is diverted into channels which are strictly personal, and sometimes perverted.

IT MUST be pointed out, however, that not all of the voices loosely termed "radical" have gone dumb. Two of them are The Industrial Workers of the World and *The Catholic Worker.* The former celebrated its fiftieth anniversary last year. The IWW, the "Wobblies," formed once a mighty force of over a million men. They were militant and fought hard in the early days of organized labor. They are still frankly and openly opposed to the capitalistic system and all its works, advocating ownership by the workers of factories, mines and railroads, and they speak with contempt of what they consider to be the compromises of the great labor unions of today; they promise more

than what they term "guaranteed annual misery." IWW cartoons still depict the capitalist as an obese old man with spats, seated at an overflowing table handing crumbs to poetic-looking young workers.

The Catholic Worker, unlike the aggressively secular IWW, is frankly religious. *The Catholic Worker* was founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, a "practical," if not doctrinaire, anarchist who said, "Organizations exist for the benefit of the organizers and not those being organized." At the height of its popularity, just before Pearl Harbor, the C. W. had a circulation of 100,000 and affiliated farms and houses of hospitality scattered all over the country. Probably many of its present sixty thousand subscribers are more interested in its corporal works of mercy than in *The Catholic Worker's* pacifism, Christian anarchism or Green Revolution—the back-to-the-land-cum-handicrafts movement. It cannot be said that either *The Catholic Worker* or the IWW has "failed"; it is rather that most people cannot seem to hear what they are saying.

The falling off of interest in these and other groups and individuals is due, of course, to a complex of reasons. There seems to be a general feeling, for one thing, that the economic situation of most people is getting better and better, and that whatever defects remain will be remedied one by one through what are now considered "normal" channels: federal, state or local government agencies, or through one of the great quasi-public agencies such as the Red Cross, or through one of the great philanthropic foundations, or through the great unions.

This is not to deny that in this country there are millions of human beings who are enduring varying degrees of real poverty. But probably most of our one hundred and sixty-five million inhabitants are persuaded, both by their own experience and the constant propaganda of our mass-media, that all is basically well. The minority with whom all is not well either hope that their undesirable situation will be improved in the foreseeable future, or are, it seems, resigned to their fate.

In such a world the young man with radical leanings begins to feel doubts as to the legitimacy of his case against a system which provides such abundance. The "victims" of the system wonder a little if there isn't something wrong with them that they're not getting on in it, or adjusting to it, or whatever it is that you have to do. There are slums, true, but on all sides they are tearing them down, and the great red towers of housing projects are going up. (Many of these housing projects have a population density greater than that of the slums they replace and there is apt to be a bit of regimentation in them, but. . . .) The streets of towns and cities are crowded with cars, fat and shiny, and with gigantic trailer-trucks, noisy and smelly; but few beside Lewis Mumford have any complaint with our urban-industrial physiognomy. It is said that the base of much of our prosperity is war preparation, but even the paupered minority feel that this is necessary. For most Americans the Soviet Union is a constant and mortal threat to the national existence, and they are prepared to agree to just about anything in order to maintain intact what we have here, including "massive retaliation." Even pacifism, a position held in the past not only by radicals but by many

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liberals, and which should be an easier position to adopt now, in the era of the H-bomb, has few adherents.

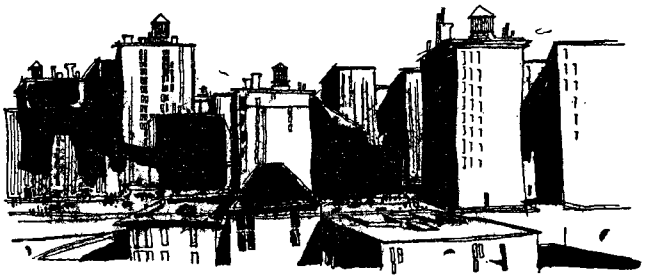
SOME WOULD blame the decline of radicalism on a general corruption brought about through a widespread acceptance of business morality, including the advertising agencies' uses and abuses of truth and talent. Connected with this is the growing conception that matter and people are not valuable in themselves but exist for the purpose of being exploited. Some blame it on the two wars; some on bureaucracy. All of these factors may play a part; one thing is certain: there's great confusion and fatigue.

It seems valid to say that the present ethos, whether it is considered good or bad, is created by the almost total mechanization and urbanization of our culture. One cannot help but feel that somehow the organization of production and distribution and recreation and politics and religion and education and all the rest of it have become so massive and complex that the individual feels overwhelmed by it. He feels that it is utterly beyond him to do anything about it except make cynical remarks and get what he can out of it. The president of a small denominational university, depressed by the decline of academic standards being forced on him, was reported as saying recently: "Education is a racket; let's get everything we can."

Thus, at a certain point quantitative differences become qualitative. H-bomb warfare is not simply bigger than the wars, say, between Italian city-states during the Middle Ages; it is a different thing altogether. A factory in which they have installed automation is not simply bigger than the village smithy; it is different.

IT IS this great remove from source that has made so many feel ineffectual and empty—tired radicals. So many compromises have to be made just to exist that many feel they are constantly betraying themselves; and they cannot do anything about either the situation or the compromise. The head swims in confusion and the heart sinks.

The New York *Herald Tribune* ran a series of articles last year on juvenile delinquency, and one of the theories advanced was that parents of the offending youths unconsciously support their attitudes and consequent activities because they themselves would like to be rebelling actively against this society. Many times it is difficult not to get the impression during labor-management negotiations that the workers cannot wait to go out on strike and are reluctant to go back to work. It has been pointed out that men strike not so much for better wages, hours and conditions, but simply to express their deep hatred for their employers, their work and their way of life. Asking for more wages is the way the men think they are striking most deeply at those whom they hate. And many times they have no reason to feel great enthusiasm for their own representatives, either. "In those days labor's representatives did not sit on velvet chairs in conference with labor's



oppressors; they did not dine in fashionable hotels with the representatives of top capitalists. They did not ride Pullmans, or make trips to Europe. The rank and file have let their servants become their masters. The workers have now to fight not alone their exploiters but likewise their own leaders, who often betray them. . . ." These are the words of Mother Jones, a great radical labor leader who lived from 1830 to 1930. This judgment of labor leaders is not being made by this writer, but it is quite conceivable that at least some of the rank and file in the labor movement have made it. In other times if such a sentiment had existed independent leaders would have arisen; it is a much more formidable task today in the face of such large and complex organizations captained by professionals; and it seems to be necessary for unions to have such organization and leadership in order to attain their ends.

But today there seems to be no leader who either has the desire or the ability to catalyze dissatisfaction into a radical movement. The workers are disinclined to respond to the IWW call to take over the factories; they only want "a bigger share of the take"—and some revenge from time to time. And they lack the tools or the trades or the property to go out on their own; they have become, in a way, enfeoffed.

There is a constant leakage of the best in the working class to the management class, leaving labor short of leadership; "Son of factory hand becomes corporation counsel" is, after all, a great American dream. It is considered good and desirable that everyone concern himself primarily with getting ahead. Altruism is suspect. There will never be a radical movement to flourish and bear fruit with that kind of a breeze blowing across the land. It will not develop when the average man feels himself unimportant and impotent, with the situation no longer in his hands, no sense of mission or the grandeur of an inheritance, nor when he is kept a spectator while the professionals run everything for him, and make sure that he is kept busy, reasonably comfortable, and never bored.

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Family Farms

EDWARD W. O'ROURKE

A SIGHT that is all too common these days is the farm family packing its household goods into a truck and leaving the farm for factory employment and city living. In many instances these family farms are being absorbed into huge factories-in-the-fields. According to the Census Bureau, in 1950 there were slightly over one hundred thousand farms with sales of $25,000 or more per year. Although they constituted a little less than two per cent of all farms, they accounted for twenty-six per cent of all agricultural products marketed. Five years later the number of these farms had increased to 134,000, or almost three per cent of all farms. In the meanwhile, moderate-size family farms with sales of $2,500 to $10,000 decreased from 1,603,000 to 1,518,000.

The decreasing number of small farms has resulted in a dangerous misapprehension. Since mass production techniques have created an abundance of manufactured goods at low per unit costs, most of us presuppose that similar techniques would be equally efficient in agriculture. This assumption is contrary to the facts. Farming involves living, changing, individual animals, plants, and soil. The area of a farm is large and varied compared to that of a factory. Hence, it is impossible to duplicate on a farm the smooth-running efficiency characteristic of an assembly line.

Support of this view comes from M. L. Mosher, Professor Emeritus of farm management at the University of Illinois, who has examined many thousands of records kept by Illinois farmers over the last twenty-five years. Professor Mosher has found that, although returns for the labor and management of the operator was highest on the largest farms, net earnings per acre and net earnings per one hundred dollars invested were highest in those farms which ran from two hundred and sixty to three hundred acres, and substantially lower in farms which were of three hundred and forty acres or more.

Professor Mosher also discovered that farm and family earnings are affected, not only by the size of the farm, but also by the level of the management and the intensity of the business. With medium-size farms (260 to 339 acres) farm and family earnings varied in 1954 from about $6,000 for a low level of management and intensity of business to about $21,000 for a high level. One farm of 200 acres earned about $34,000 in 1954.

Even more serious than its relationship to productivity are the effects of large-scale farming on community institutions and the social pattern of such communities. Professor Mosher found that most of the families on farms of from 180 to 259 acres fell into the standard to well-to-do income brackets. Among those who farm 240 acres or more, two distinct classes of farmers were found. The first, constituting fifty to sixty per cent of the farm population, are hired men and their families. The other class consists of operators' families with incomes which provide comparative luxury and wealth.

ANY LAND policy which permits large numbers of persons to own more land than they can farm with the labor of their own families is undesirable. Throughout history, the individual farmer and society as a whole have suffered greatly whenever a large part of the work of farming has been done by hired laborers. The plantations of the South illustrate the evils of this system very well. While the land owners live in luxury, the workers suffer poverty. It is almost impossible for the child of the worker to become a landowner, because he lacks the capital and the educational opportunities necessary to better his position. Society is hurt because the system stresses routine, regulation, and caste, instead of initiative, diligence, and opportunity.

Back in 1946, Dr. Walter R. Goldschmidt of the University of California at Los Angeles directed a study of two communities in the San Joaquin Valley in California. The first community, Arvin, is typical of large-scale farming in that area. In the other community, Dinuba, farms of moderate size predominate. The two communities are very similar in the crops grown, soil fertility, proximity to markets, and other factors affecting their economic and social activities. Dr. Goldschmidt's study demonstrates strikingly the social problems large-scale farming brings to a community.

In spite of their greater numbers, people in Dinuba, the small-farm community, have a higher standard of living than those living in Arvin. More than half of the breadwinners in Dinuba are independently employed businessmen, white-collar workers, or farmers;

Father O'Rourke is a member of the executive committee of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.

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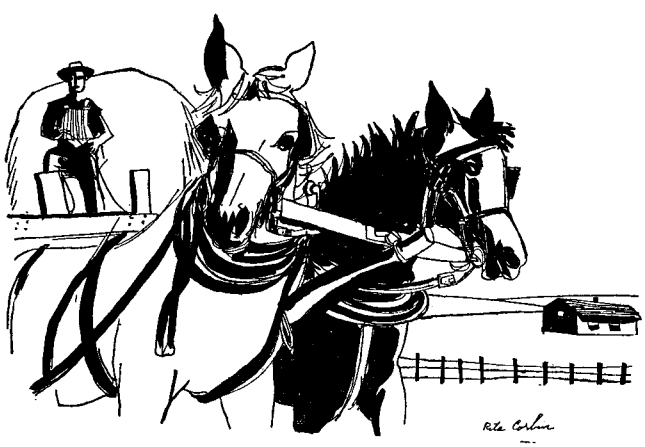
in the large-farm community the proportion is less than one-fifth. In Dinuba less than one-third of the breadwinners are agricultural laborers (almost all with low and insecure income), while in Arvin the proportion of persons in this category is nearly two-thirds of all employed. The schools in the small-farm community are more numerous and offer a better curriculum. In Dinuba there are four elementary schools and one high school; in Arvin there is only one elementary school. In the small-farm community, churches outnumber those in Arvin by two to one, and a similar proportion exists in the number of churchgoers in each town. In the light of such facts, the rapid increase of large farms throughout the nation is a matter of concern.

MANY PERSONS presume that a family farm is relatively small. This is not necessarily true, for the size of a family farm will vary according to the location and the type of crops produced. It may be a five-acre truck farm in Delaware, a one hundred-acre dairy farm in Wisconsin, a two hundred and fifty-acre corn-hog farm in Iowa, a two thousand-acre wheat farm in Kansas, or a ten thousand-acre ranch in Texas. A family farm is simply one operated by a family for the support of that family. The family provides the managerial decisions and most of the labor. It depends upon the income of the farm for its livelihood. In short, the family farm is a family enterprise, and it should be noted that regrettably few such enterprises exist in industry today. It is doubly significant, therefore, that most American farms are still operated by and for the family.

Mechanization, of course, makes it possible for a family to operate a larger farm today than that of their grandparents. This is fine, but the danger comes from those who would engage in agricultural undertakings so large that they must depend chiefly upon hired labor to accomplish that undertaking.

Such a concentration of wealth and power in the hands of certain land-owners is taking place. A propertyless farm laboring class is growing. More and more large farms employ underprivileged laborers, migratory and local, who are paid much less than living wages. Both state and federal legislation protect the operators of such large farms in their exploitation of their workers. This is a gross injustice to the workers themselves, and it also creates unfair competition for the family farmer, since it is difficult for him to compete with the large farm, which expends too little on labor costs, and still give his family a decent standard of living.



IF THE DICTATES of distributive justice are to be followed, government has an obligation to aid any segment of the population which is important to the welfare of the nation and which is receiving substantially less than its just share in national income. The family farm is immensely valuable to the nation, and the operators of small and moderate-size farms are not getting fair returns for their capital and labor. This situation should be remedied by a farm program which would reestablish justice in this area.

Thus far the cures proposed for the farm problem have been worse than the maladies. Price-support programs for basic commodities have been administered in a way advantageous to large, not to small, farms. Incredibly huge loans and subsidies have fallen into the hands of operators of large cotton, wheat, and corn farms. It is ironical that so great a social evil as large-scale farming should be supported by tax money.

In any farm program, some sort of "dollar limit" should be placed on the amount of payments any one farmer may receive from the government. The exclusion of such a provision from the farm bill recently submitted for the President's signature is most disheartening. And a similar objection might well be raised to the "soil bank" proposed in that farm bill. Reducing acreage handicaps the operator of a small farm much more than the operator of a huge farm. Many who cooperate in such a program will attempt to purchase or lease more land, in order to compensate for the acres taken out of production. Thus, this program will artificially stimulate an increase in the size of farms.

We need, and need badly, more enlightened legislation than this. We need legislation aimed at the welfare of farmers, not personal gain and partisan politics. And private individuals who sell or lease land should keep in mind the social implications of these transactions; whenever possible, land should be sold or leased to responsible family farmers, not to big operators. Furthermore, taxation, credit, and education should be reconsidered with a view to strengthening of the family farm pattern, not to weakening it. The family farm is an efficient and hardy institution. Give it a fair deal and it will survive. Replace it with factories-in-the-fields and inefficiency and social degeneration will be the result.

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THE SCREEN

LOOKING, LOOKING EVERYWHERE

IN SPITE of its great length, John Ford's new picture, "The Searchers," is quite thin on plot. It is mainly concerned with a search by a middle-aged man (played with his usual aplomb by John Wayne) assisted by a young fellow, part Indian, (played with junior aplomb by Jeffrey Hunter). The search, which starts in Texas in 1868, is for Wayne's two nieces who were kidnapped by Comanches after the Indians massacred most of the family; it is half finished when the elder of the two girls is found dead and then it continues throughout the Southwest for some five years. As determined as mail carriers, Wayne and Hunter go on and on relentlessly through the heat of summer and cold of winter having all kinds of adventures with Indians and whites, some of which are interesting, some only so-so. But in any case, we begin to find the search too long, not because of lack of interest in the girl (although the film fails to keep us informed on what happened to her until near the end when the two men find her living as a Comanche squaw) but mainly because her uncle, as played by Wayne, is such an unpleasant, sour, Indian-hating character. What makes John so disdainful of most people and so full of hate toward Indians in particular? Why must he, with a fanatical obsession second perhaps only to Captain Ahab's pursuit of Moby Dick, run from clue to clue through the years knowing that he plans to kill the girl when he finds her because she has been despoiled by the Indians?

I suspect that the script which Frank S. Nugent wrote from Alan LeMay's novel had the answers to the many questions which the picture proposes, but they were lost either by Director Ford while he was busy paying so much attention to local color, which is excellent, or by the cutters who had to do something about a film that ran to such excessive length. In any case, while the plot and sub-plot (about Jeffrey Hunter's romance with the girl he left behind) are not satisfactory, "The Searchers" treats audiences to some magnificent Southwest scenery which John Ford shows off well in VistaVision and Technicolor. Director Ford also uses his large cast (including Ward Bond, Olive Carey, Vera Miles, John Qualen, Henry Brandon, Harry Carey, Jr., Antonio Moreno *et al.*) effectively to get the feel of period and place.

THE MOVIES seem to feel that we are far enough away from World War II now for them to use it as background instead of as the main theme. This is disconcerting when the main theme is somewhat trivial, or, as in the case of "D-Day the Sixth of June," when the title leads us to believe that we are in for big things instead of the contrived love triangle we get. Among the men on a crowded assault craft crossing the English Channel on the famous June 6, 1944, are two officers who have in common, beside an interest in the Normandy invasion, an interest in one girl. The first flashback, seen from the point of view of the British colonel (Richard Todd), goes back to 1942 when he and the girl (Dana Wynter) said goodbye before he left for Africa and she promised to wait. The second and much longer flashback, seen from the viewpoint of the American captain (Robert Taylor), concentrates, in between shots of Robert going about his war work with the ETOUSA headquarters, on the love affair between the American and this English girl, who is now a Red Cross worker. They fight against falling in love—because Taylor has a wife back in Connecticut who is devoted to him and Dana still remembers her promise to Todd. But the vicissitudes of war and the attraction of Robert and Dana for each other, dominated by a this-is-bigger-than-both-of-us attitude, win out. Finally the story gets back to the present and that excursion on D-Day. Director Henry Koster tried to whip up something tragic like "Farewell to Arms," but his people aren't very interesting or well motivated. Koster does, however, make Dana Wynter quite attractive. The liveliest parts of the picture are those concerned with the loud-mouthed, over-ambitious colonel (expertly played by Edmond O'Brien) who lands in a psycho ward, and with the antagonism and competition, sometimes kidding, sometimes serious, that went on between the Americans and British.

THIS SAME antagonism and misunderstanding, plus a French chip on the shoulder, is well portrayed in "Gaby." The picture, an up-dated to World War II version of Robert Sherwood's "Waterloo Bridge," has a young French dancer (Leslie Caron) and a corporal from Nebraska (John Kerr) meeting, quarreling, falling in love in London in 1944. When army red tape prevents their getting married and John is reported dead after D-Day, Leslie is overwhelmed with guilt at not having slept with her ardent young lover before he left. She tries to make up for this with a series of unhappy soldiers in wartime London, and when John turns up again after being wounded and missing, Leslie, now guilt-ridden for another reason, feels she is no longer worthy of this nice, clean-cut American boy.

"Waterloo Bridge" has been changed considerably between its first appearance as a play and now its third appearance as a movie. The greatest change in this version is in making the girl a Catholic. Yet this is done without apparent reason, for Gaby's Catholicism

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is superficial, and does not alter her decisions or actions. Director Curtis Bernhardt allows Leslie Caron and John Kerr to exhibit great charm and warmth during the first part of "Gaby" but the last part moves feebly and peters out in sentimentality.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"CRIME AND CRITICISM"

Spokane, Wash.

TO the Editors: Mr. Gerry Cashman's criticism of my article, "Crime and Criticism" [May 18], seems to be the result of a misconception of what I wrote as much as it is a difference of opinion. Mr. Cashman's opening statement that the article is "riddled with ambiguities and contradictions" would lead one to believe that he has found loose bolts in the very heart of my machinery, yet what he specifically attacks are items of minor importance in the introduction and conclusion.

Mr. Cashman takes exception to my remark that perhaps what the whodunit needs is a sustaining body of criticism to give it stature. No amount of criticism can give the whodunit "real" stature, he counters, if the whodunit doesn't already possess it. In the first place, the remark was meant with some irony, as I think its context makes clear. In the second place, if I must be taken literally, I used "stature" in its not unusual sense of "stature in the eyes of the literary public." And does Mr. Cashman believe that writers are unaffected by what critics have correctly or incorrectly concluded about the stature of the field they are working in?

I suspect that Mr. Cashman makes so much of this because he thinks I am arguing that whodunits have more "real" stature than he is willing to concede them. I gather from his last paragraph that he takes it for granted that I stand against his belief that character is presented quite shallowly in the whodunit. Nothing I said or implied opposes that conviction. In my article I was primarily concerned with the reasons why people read whodunits, not with their literary worth. I think it quite obvious that character is presented quite abstractly in this kind of fiction. The very nature of it makes a depth presentation of character unlikely, even undesirable. The whodunit is a ritualized game; the people in it are, with rare exceptions, only counters, like the people in western stories. At the same time it happens to be a game that reveals a great deal about the people who play and the kind of world they live in. It is this aspect of the game that interests me.

JOHN P. SISK.

"FREUD, CATHOLICS, AND CULTURE"

Toronto, Canada.

TO the Editors: I read Father Daly's "Freud, Catholics, and Culture" [March 9] with great interest and sympathy. . . . Here was a man who was not in the isolation of some Catholic school library. In the very stronghold of secular education, he had his fingers on the pulse of the nation's universities, and what is more he dared to pursue his diagnosis even to a prescription. It was up to Catholic philosophers, according to Father Daly, to make their truth communicable, to find some kind of peripheral common-denominator (e.g., Freud's "biological self" and the soul) and to expand from there. In short, it was up to the Thomists (particularly) to translate the truth, now so esoteric as to seem antiquated; it was up to them to make philosophy dynamic, a force for definite good in a society which thinks more often than not the same things but in a different terminology. According to Father Daly, it is the duty of the Catholic philosopher not only to see what the commentators say, but chiefly to see what society is saying. Only by understanding a society's language in terms of our own can we hope to communicate. To quest the soul in Freud's "biological self" is exactly what the Catholic philosopher should do in order to show those who believe in such a "hard, irreducible, stubborn core" that, in truth, they are believing in the human soul. . . .

I write this letter to beg those men and women who so glibly condemn Father Daly's proposal that Thomism should be meaningful in society *qua* society, to either heed him or rivet their eyes on some hieroglyphic tome and keep quiet.

The Church is militant; it must be spare and ready in society. It cannot rest on commentators who are only commentators, on philosophers who are only philosophers and not men in a society of men. The Church is leaven: it and everything about it must be dynamic. It can not be static . . . even in the terminology of Saint Thomas. . . .

NATHAN A. CERVO.

St. Albans, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Since it is notoriously difficult to prove a negative, it is up to Father Daly to show, from Freud's words, that the "soul" and "biological selves" are the same thing. His letter merely invokes evidence to show that in certain respects they resemble each other. This is a psychological truism that by no means bridges the clear (sic) gap which yawns between them. And so my modest demurrer still stands that you can't uncover a soul in the radical empiricism of the Unconscious which Freud "really asserted."

(Rev.) VINCENT A. BROWN.

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Nathanael West's Holy Fool

ARTHUR COHEN

TO NEGLECT Nathanael West is to neglect a writer who has examined the possibilities of belief and the consequences of its absence in our age and our society. Like Dostoevsky, though lesser, he is a writer who expressed his concern with ultimate questions in terms of the fate of the "holy fool" in our world. The consideration which he merits does not, however, depend primarily upon the artistic merits of his novels. His work is admittedly uneven. This is often the case with writers who allow their style to follow after their passion, and the passion of West determined his mood, his care, his clarity, his brilliance. Where he is most angry, in *Miss Lonelyhearts* or *The Day of the Locust,* one would have to go far to find his contemporary equal. Where he is unsure and experimental, seeking out a mood or groping for tone—as in much of *Balso Snell* or *A Cool Million*—he becomes alternately obscure or bathetic.

It is not for elegance of style, therefore, that one reads West. But this is true of Dostoevsky as well. It is rather the kinds of passions these writers sustain that concern us. Nor is the comparison of West and Dostoevsky accidental, for West considered himself most profoundly a disciple of Dostoevsky. *Balso Snell,* for example, makes frequent references to Dostoevsky, even employing a character named John Raskolnikov Gibson. West's writing is filled with quotations from and allusions to Dostoevsky.

Dostoevsky, in a profound sense, provides the paradigm of West's creative activity. It should not be forgotten that the Dostoevsky of the novels (not the journalist, Slavophil jingoist, or representative of conservative politics) was a radical critic of human society, founding upon an ultimate dialectical indecision an absolute critique of Western materialism. It is not possible to sustain the theological interpretation of Dostoevsky without severe limitation. Dostoevsky's concern was neither formally theological nor particularly occupied with the coherence of theological insight. The Christian passion which marks numberless of his characters and colors the tone of his novels is counterbalanced by equally passionate heresy, disbelief, and perplexity. Never a scoffer or skeptic, Dostoevsky still took the mystery of human events as a token of God's inscrutability and man's ineradicable freedom. The Dostoevskean hero is in some sense a pilgrim of the dialectic, forcing alternately the contradictory moments of the dialectic to the fore, submitting them to the life test, and falling victim to their implications. So the experiment of Raskolnikov, Ivan, Stavrogin, Kirilov, Prince Myshkin, and the Underground Man.

IT IS surely the hero of the dialectic, albeit the modern dialectic, who occupies the center of West's four novels: *The Dream Life of Balso Snell, Miss Lonelyhearts, A Cool Million,* and *The Day of the Locust.*

Balso Snell, West's first novel, is self-consciously *avant garde.* It was written during West's stay in Paris from 1924-1926, although it was not published until 1931. *The Dream Life of Balso Snell* is a rambling, episodic, frequently disgusting pilgrimage of a poet through the innards of the Trojan Horse, to which he has gained entrance. It is a pilgrimage through a most unattractive unconscious, but one which nevertheless defined a number of themes which recur in West's later writing. The ascetic, the mystic, the cripple, the pervert all appear. The compassion, which found more subtle expression later in *Miss Lonelyhearts* and *The Day of the Locust,* is present, but unformed. Balso Snell is passive—confronting with contempt and loathing the progeny of his dreams—estrangement, the unlove, absolute suffering, the pain of the world. The hero is unformed, since he reflects at best the detours of the unconscious. There is no stand, only a tentative apprehension of themes.

Throughout West's work there runs a single-minded preoccupation with the character of "the holy fool." This theme has a long history in Western religious thought, an especial history in Russian religious thought, and a unique history in the work of Dostoevsky. From the unworkable plan for a novel to have been called *The Life of the Great Sinner,* Dostoevsky developed *The Brothers Karamazov* and subsequently *The Idiot* and *The Devils.* In each of these, elements of the same dialectic emerge: the opposition of the perfect sinner and the perfect saint. Dostoevsky was sensitive to the difficulty of making such characters authentic and believable. Raskolnikov, Ivan, Smerdyakov, Stavrogin, Kirilov emerge on one side; Sonia, Alyosha, Prince Myshkin on the other. The conditions

Mr. Cohen writes frequently for this and other magazines and is currently completing a book on Martin Buber.

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of the Russian world: poverty, oppression, drunkenness, were the elements of external relief. The protest was not, however, against the degradation of the physical and social world, but against the impoverishment of the inner life of man, the void of inner truth. The effort of Dostoevsky was to relocate the varieties of human feeling and authenticity, to restore the possibility of sanctity.

IN WEST the problem of "the holy fool" remains, though its statement and nuance are different. America in the thirties posed different problems than Russia in the sixties and seventies of the last century. Unlike their Russian nineteenth-century counterparts, the American intellectuals and artists were already in rebellion and alienation. The objective order had witnessed the triumph of industrial bureaucracy, the dislocation of personality, the fragmentation of the social order. Dostoevsky was a prophetic novelist, anticipating what was to be in the objective order, as it had already emerged symptomatically in the inner life of man. There is no question but that the spirit of man records more quickly and sensitively what emerges but gradually in the social order. Man usually knows, long in advance of his destruction, that he is being destroyed. It is Dostoevsky's uniqueness to have ascertained the consequence of man's disorder and to have described it. He is prophetic in the same sense that we recognize Kierkegaard, Burckhardt, and Nietzsche to be prophetic.

West, on the contrary, anticipates nothing that is to come. It is his merit to have described with unbelievable clarity the destruction that has passed, the pestilence that has visited us and has been invited to stay. The power of *Miss Lonelyhearts,* the ineffectualness of *A Cool Million,* and the more elaborate structure of *The Day of the Locust* result from the fact that the deterioration of the American world, West believed, was accomplished. The savageness manifest in *Miss Lonelyhearts* could become more subtle and exploratory in subsequent novels; West could return to questions of form because there was no longer any urgency to the problem. As desperate as *Miss Lonelyhearts* indubitably is, it is perhaps more optimistic than his later novels. For by the time of *The Day of the Locust,* West's anguish had settled and become tolerable.

Miss Lonelyhearts, the male writer of an advice column, has a solution to the horror of the world: it is what he calls "the Christ complex." The Christ complex is precisely a complex, not a belief in specific documents of faith, not faith in any order of sacrament or scheme of salvation. It is a complex, a fixation of the mind, a conviction that only if Miss Lonelyhearts himself becomes the shoulders of the world, the bearer of man's suffering, the kisser of lepers, restorer of bodies, nurse-maid to the suffering and distressed, will humanity be healed.

In *Miss Lonelyhearts* the primary text is taken from Father Zossima of *The Brothers Karamazov*: "Love a man even in his sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth. . . . Love the animals, love the plants, love everything . . . you will come to love the whole world with an all-embracing love."

Miss Lonelyhearts, however, does not love the world. He is disgusted by the world, sensuality, his own body and passion. The contempt for the physical is hazed by liquor and rhapsodized by that mental liquor of the ascetic deceiver, the egotism of suffering. He must force himself to love, to take upon himself more and more of the world's anguish even at the sacrifice of all of himself, of the sanity which enables man not only to love completely, but wisely. Needless to say, his "Christ-complex" destroys him, for it deludes him. He misrepresents the world and is martyr to his misrepresentation.

In *Miss Lonelyhearts* West attempted to make a statement of what happens to "the holy fool" in the modern world. He is not treated as a mad saint and revered for his sanctity and the divinity of his madness. He is misunderstood and destroyed. It is not that he is either saint or fool, for, in West's view, he is a victim of the world he seeks to love, fragmented by the broken world he wishes to mend. He misapprehends the world because he is not capable, as modern man is generally not capable, of maintaining any distance from the world, any perspective or quiet before it.

A Cool Million sees the "holy fool" from a different point of view. It was modeled, as Josephine Herbst, West's close friend, has said, after the Horatio Alger stories, all of which West read in preparation of the character of Lemuel Pitkin. Such a model gives the clue to West's satire, for Lemuel Pitkin is all fool, all externality. He is the perfect fool, for he is nothing that the world does not make him. As a result, all his suffering is physical. The spirit, empty as it is, naive as it is, wholly American as it is, is untouched. The hero, nevertheless, in spite of having nothing to lose, loses all—his teeth, his eyes, a leg, his scalp. He is imprisoned, tortured, beaten up, exhibited for public amusement, caught in riots, victimized by Communists, exploited by capitalists, and killed as martyr to a semi-fascist Americanism movement. What a ludicrous hero!

Nevertheless, *A Cool Million* extends the argument of *Miss Lonelyhearts.* It eliminates another possibility of statement. "The holy fool" can be an ass. When heroism is made the extenuation of externality, when it is simply a foil of the public world, political values, counter-materialism, or pro-nationalism, the hero becomes incredible. What West satirizes is the kind of hero that makes national histories—Washington at the

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cherry tree, Jackson at the redoubts of New Orleans, Davy Crockett and his mountain lion. These are the public, legendary heroisms that propel a national community into self-congratulation when all is rotting about it.

HIS LAST novel, his most ambitious novel, *The Day of the Locust,* is a modification of the character of Miss Lonelyhearts and Lemuel Pitkin. Homer Simpson, the central character of *The Day of the Locust,* is the final statement and defeat of "the holy fool." God has disappeared from discussion as early as *Miss Lonelyhearts,* not to reappear. This is not to say that He does not manifest Himself in the virtues of West's heroes; but He is no longer present in Himself, nor is He any longer addressed, as He was in *Balso Snell* or *Miss Lonelyhearts.* Christ has vanished, but His impress is retained.

Homer Simpson, the clerk from Waynesville, Iowa, comes to Hollywood, with meager savings, to discover happiness, peace, the perfect death, only to realize the consummate waste and boredom of such ambition. Instead, Homer wishes to love and adore. It is his misfortune to meet Faye Greener, who will have him merely to gratify her lust for possession—no love to return, just to own him, even though he is unattractive and meaningless to her. He demands nothing but to be owned and protected. Love is compressed into the syntax of the American world—the syntax of possession and ownership. Homer is holy, for his love demands nothing but to be in the presence of the object adored. It wishes only that Faye be present. She can make love to others, only so long as she is there. Homer is fool, however, to imagine that mere satiety with presence can be focused in the temporal order.

West makes clear that the middle-class image of security always destroys itself because it roots itself repeatedly in the transitory, in the most flimsy of all values, the security of place. Faye naturally leaves him. Homer returns to the one place of security, what West, in psychological jargon, calls "the uterine position." Homer curls up into a womb-ball and remains as such until his climactic end. The novel concludes where Homer, wandering before a crowd massed in front of a Hollywood movie opening, is tormented by a little boy throwing rocks at him. This unmotivated cruelty shocks him out of the inactivity of his grief, and he tries to trample the child to death. The brutality of the riot that follows is unbelievable. The quietude of the bored, tired, cheated middle classes disappears and the brutality of the race emerges.

The holy fool is ultimately defeated. The saint can communicate only when there is a community to address, when people are at least bound by common affections and belief, when they share sources of feeling and devotion. The saint cannot speak when absolutely nobody listens. He may live and die, known to God, but such secret sanctity will not allow us to praise, witness, or follow him in his way. Miss Lonelyhearts, Lemuel Pitkin, Homer Simpson are defeated by their self-deception about the world and their misapprehension of themselves. Underlying all is West's bitter conviction that there is no communication in our world. Man shares nothing with man. If man seeks to address his fellow, whether through the active pursuit of love or the passive submission to others, he is destroyed. West's conclusion is that the holy fool will always be misapprehended and destroyed as long as the values of the industrial American world prevail. Success, money, power—all conspire to cast out love, to freeze the heart, to dull sensibility.

WEST MAY be remembered by us for having attempted to make a saint and a fool a convincing hero of modern fiction. His failure to support the saint and fool in triumph, to bring him into the world as an instrument of redemption, is testimony to his honesty and limitation. Unlike the world of Raskolnikov and Dmitri, our world is not redeemed by the fidelity of inwardness and attentiveness of love. West obviously could not accept the Dostoevskean answer, however much he might have desired to. He could not believe that others could be saved when he himself was not, that others could sanctify passions when he did not, that others could win out against the domination of success, when he saw so clearly that his career was constantly blunted and rendered uncertain by failure.

It may be that West's career is the triumph of unbelief. More likely it is the triumph of a realism which is aware that belief cannot survive unless man trusts its authenticity. Ours is surely an age that does not trust God and ours is a society, West makes clear, that does not permit such trust to re-emerge.

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Extended Comment on French Intellectuals

THE MANDARINS. By Simone de Beauvoir. World. $6.

By FRANK GETLEIN

FOR REASONS that escape me completely, this novel was awarded the Prix Goncourt on its publication. It may be a poor translation, working French gold into English dross, but there's a lot of dross here that can't be blamed on any translator. More likely, there's a strong, concealed strain of misogyny in French letters, akin to that which prompted Degas to refuse to believe Mary Cassatt could draw as she did. Thus the Goncourt Mandarins passed the palm to La Grande Sartreuse as one praises a three-year-old violinist: not that she writes so well, but that she writes at all.

The title and the reviews following the French publication led one to believe that Mlle. de Beauvoir's latest was a satiric exposé of Parisian existentialism and of French intellectual life generally. The satire and the exposé stop at the title. The characters are all intellectual and mostly French. The tone, the point of view, is soulfully sympathetic. The story is told, as a matter of fact, from two points of view, in the first and the third person, but except for the sudden appearance and disappearance of "I," there's no difference between the parts. "I" is Anne Dubreuihl, psychoanalyst wife to Robert Dubreuihl, the grand old man of the Movement, whatever the movement is. The third person is usually Henri, brilliant young novelist, editor and political thinker. Henri is brilliant in the special sense reserved to characters in novels, his brilliance manifested not in what he says, not in what he writes, not in what he thinks, but in what is said of him, namely, that he is brilliant.

Henri is "young" in the same sense; all his reactions strike the reader as at least middle-aged and thoroughly worn-out. As we open, he is living with Paula, who clings to him to the point of psychosis, while he wonders whether he'd be happier without her. He keeps on wondering and she keeps on clinging. Presently he goes off to Portugal with Anne and Robert's daughter, Nadine, a late teen-ager who clearly misses her lover, who was killed by the Germans. Meanwhile, Anne, long celibate with Robert, takes a lover primarily to find out what Nadine sees in sex.

One of the many recurrent motives of the book is that only politics is exciting nowadays and ain't it a shame. Mlle. de Beauvoir certainly proves the point in *The Mandarins*. The only time the book comes to life, and that briefly, is when a political question of conscience becomes the momentary chief concern of writer and reader. More often *The Mandarins* is very dull and very flat.

To revive an old formula, if sexual morality and sexual convention did not exist, novelists would have invented them. The reason is that they pose some kind of sanction to sexual activity. Sanction makes for suspense; suspense makes for reader interest: will her husband shoot them? Will the boy contract some loathsome disease? Will her mother insist on marriage? The only narrative question raised by the constant cohabitation in *The Mandarins* is, Will they ever get out of that bed so we can get on with the story?

Henri's course moves from Paula to Nadine to Josette, the appetizing daughter of a collaborator. Nadine's is like a Long Island Local, stopping at every station. Anne, her mother, after the experiment already mentioned, goes to America and finds true love in her old age. She is thirty-nine. Her lover is a hard-boiled, Chicago-style, social-realist writer. Over several years, they go down the Mississippi on a boat, fly to Central America to look at ruins and Anne begins to work out a transatlantic *ménage à trois*. Her American sulks at her devotion, celibate or not, to her husband.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Mlle. de Beauvoir contrives to make French intellectual politics as boring as she has already made sex, though not nearly as explicit. Henri and Robert flirt endlessly with the Communists, strike attitudes and fearlessly expose man's inhumanity to man and dat ole debil, the American State Department. The novel comes hesitantly to life with the arrival of one moral problem so recognized. Henri is asked by Josette's mother to give false testimony to establish a war-time collaborator as a Resistance man. There is, for a moment, something resembling a human situation. Henri does as he is asked and the moment sinks slowly into the all-enveloping fog of Mlle. de Beauvoir's intellection. Henri marries Nadine, who pouts. The American drops Anne, who toys with suicide. Robert recovers from his cynicism and plunges back into politics. As the sun sinks slowly in the West—a dirty word—the boys, having lost their party and their paper as a result of Communist chicanery, are preparing to try the game again, and Anne has decided to live.

Actually the materials are here for a very decent go at the hyper-intellectualized, neutralist position in France and elsewhere. Henri systematically abandons moral position after moral position in the hope of not harming the Communist cause. His final abandonment of all he fought for in the Resistance could easily have come as a climactic act of the pure intellect trying to outguess history. As Mlle. de Beauvoir tells it, the story loses all point because there aren't any principles to start with. Worse, the heavy and steady thinking that presumably goes on among the mandarins gets all over her prose. First the character thinks for a couple of paragraphs, then he speaks the same thoughts, then he thinks some more, somewhat in the old newspaper interview style of indirect-direct discourse: "We walked along in silence. What was he thinking of? "'What are you thinking of,' I asked."

This approach makes the book

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roughly twice as long as it ought to be. Sometimes, of course, several characters go through the same scene and then the passage is three times as long as necessary. The author can also do the indirect-direct routine in reverse, as here, the end of the book, when Anne has let herself be lured back to life with the thought that her corpse would create enormous problems for the other characters:

"He smiled at me. 'Where are you?'

" 'Here,' I replied.

"I am here."

This enlightening exchange leads into the final soliloquy on life and death. There have been quite a few, the philosophical message of the book having been that we all die sooner or later, so what the hell. Now a note of groundless hope is sounded, to the effect that if you're not dead you might as well be alive. "Who knows?" she muses, "Perhaps one day I'll be happy again. Who knows?"

And, she might have added, who cares?

Deadly Patterns

THE LONG VIEW. By Elizabeth Jane Howard. Reynal. $3.75.

By ALICE SAXON

THE perils deemed peculiar to modern marriage—intellect-ridden victims living together in desperate isolation, clinging to opposing needs, paralyzed by over-awareness—are meat for the analytic technique of today's novelist. It was the theme of a moving Japanese work appearing in translation last year, and it is once more the concern of a highly perceptive piece of writing; the power of *The Long View,* however, depends less on the brevity and quiet suggestiveness so apparent in the Japanese *Some Prefer Nettles* than on a masterful accumulation of analytic detail. Miss Howard is preoccupied with the inescapable: the deadly patterns of the militant, albeit sensitive, ego. She knows thoroughly the reluctant rendering, the helpless reception of pain in the relationship of two people; and she can make a deft scoop of the multiple and pitiful impulses underlying a single utterance or gesture.

To give a full picture of the doomed marriage of Antonia and Conrad Fleming, a species of the flashback is used, but not in the form of arbitrary and fanciful flights of memory. Five episodes, limited in duration, are pinpointed by the author; and the movement is regressive, so that the book begins with the complete impasse of Antonia's marriage to Conrad Fleming and closes with her first youthful encounter of him as he takes her firmly by the hand and suggests, "This isn't the end; it may very well be the beginning."

In the interim, the temptation is to be overwhelmed by the complexity of the episodes, both separately and cumulatively, to the point of feeling that here is documentary evidence of the futility of attempting to overcome the isolation and cross-purposefulness of human personalities. The protagonists (like Meredith's "rapid falcons in a snare") draw themselves deeper into pain in direct proportion to the superiority of their intellects and the fineness of their sensibilities.

But beneath the testament to complexity, the sophistication of misery in fascinating surroundings (only the best hotels and restaurants) is an unmistakable and unbewildering tale of immaturity. The marriage was seized upon originally as the satisfaction of a complex but effete imagination; children are violently rejected. Staticism is the curious ideal. The gift of a Blake painting in which a pair of children are woven into the design precipitates an early and haunting quarrel.

Nevertheless, there are children; and there is the inevitable dissolution of the original picture of one another. The marriage becomes a vehicle for wounding. They have nothing outside themselves.

In middle age Antonia regards with helpless dismay the impending marriage of her son. He and his fiancée seem to be getting married because they can't think of anything better to do, really to fulfill some vague, romantic image of themselves. Muses the prospective bride: "Well, he was rather good-looking and they thought the same about things, like not believing much in God and thinking circuses were rather cruel . . . all that kind of thing. Masses of things really. . . ." Later there will be nothing to bind the vagaries of their maturing personalities and they will become enemies. But this is Mrs. Fleming's view, the long view.

But one finally begins to notice that the characters are almost constantly in a state of white-lipped weariness (over everything and nothing); one begins to count the number of times hot baths are drawn (endlessly) or hot milk or hot brandy is fetched—the only effective steps these people take to assuage the blows they perpetually inflict upon each other. One can not remain unaffected by this unrelieved accumulation of unhappiness; but the final result is to marvel somewhat at the author and to become completely engrossed in her novel.

A Box-Office Hit

THE SUDDEN STRANGERS. By William E. Barrett. Doubleday. $3.95.

By JOHN F. SULLIVAN

HOLLYWOOD may well have felt, when the project of turning William Barrett's earlier success, *The Left Hand of God,* into a motion picture came under consideration, that it was a fairly chancy undertaking. After all, it was the story of a downed pilot masquerading as a priest, with whom a girl then falls in love, and it could have posed difficulties. But the lucky producer who snaps up the rights to Barrett's new novel, *The Sudden Strangers,* need have no doubts at all about its eventual colossal triumph at the box office. Not only does it contain no possible difficulties, it has more tried and true material than anything since the story of Lincoln's doctor's dog. It has, as they say, everything.

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Of course, readers of my generation may share one little misgiving with me. This time the slightly unconventional hero happens to be an uncommonly literate baseball player. Really, I suppose, there is no reason why baseball players should not be capable of doubling as professors of English literature, but all the same I had the queer notion that I was reading a most improbable novel about the old American Leaguer, Moe Berg—an illusion that owes something to the fact that the hero of this novel is a catcher, too.

The catcher, Bart McBride by name, has remarkable antecedents. He is the son, by an early and long since put-by marriage, of Dorinda Daly, Broadway's reigning queen of musical comedy. But Bart, in quest of an identity, tracks down his father, who turns out to be humble Brother Anselm, faithful Brother Carpenter in the little monastery of St. Urban's.

A man may find his identity through a son as well as through a father, so Bart is also searching for the illegitimate child he fathered as the climax of a campus romance. Since he has now fallen in love with his mother's secretary, a standard soap-opera problem is generated: Will Bart McBride find happiness with Mary Norbert, pretty orphan girl whose minor talent is overshadowed by that of her employer, the great Dorinda Daly? Or will he fall again for Aleta Waringly, unhappy daughter of a wealthy detergent manufacturer?

None of this would be worth serious attention, of course, did not the novel rather self-consciously offer itself as Catholic Literature. However, while it introduces theological and philosophical material, this is so over-simplified and thinned down—to the soothing level of a Bing Crosby vehicle—that I suspect it was introduced for the same reason that Shakespeare in *Measure for Measure* uses a heroine who is a nun—sheer theatrical effect.

Sometimes, indeed, the philosophical material, if it could be taken seriously, would be open to grave objection. For example, the book contains a scene in which Bart and the detergent manufacturer discuss life. They come up with the theory that life is a game, and that modern troubles stem from the urge to security, which has taken the uncertainty out of the game. This casual equation—the economic application of which I have encountered from attackers of pensions and the annual wage—would require, if it occurred in a more serious context, exploration and, I think, condemnation. But in *The Sudden Strangers* it is, like the Catholicity, only part of the attempt to give respectability through Significance to a story that is inherently without either.

Lucid Account of Soviet Conditions

MOSCOW WAS MY PARISH, By Georges Bissonnette, A.A. McGraw-Hill. $3.95.

By HELENE ISWOLSKY

HERE IS a book of great documentary value. However, it is a book not quite like other reports by special correspondents, experts or tourists who have visited Moscow recently. The very title chosen by the author points to his essential theme. A *parish* is not just a place one visits for a time or wants to write about casually. It is a place where one lives as member of a family, and where the priest is responsible from day to day and the year round. It was in this spirit that Father Georges Bissonnette came to Moscow as chaplain to American and other non-Russian Catholics residing in the Soviet Capital. This function was established by the 1933 Roosevelt-Litvinov Agreement and has been held for many years by American priests of the Assumptionist order to which the author belongs.

Father Bissonnette was well equipped to fill this post. He was the first graduate from Fordham's Institute of Contemporary Russian studies, spoke Russian and was well versed in Russian history, literature, religious philosophy, church affairs and the techniques of Marxism-Leninism. At the time Georges Bissonnette arrived in Moscow, many difficulties had arisen on the path of an American chaplain. He was no longer permitted to celebrate Mass, as his predecessors had done, at St. Louis, the only Catholic church in Moscow. Now St. Louis was assigned to a Latvian priest, that is, a Soviet citizen; this priest was to min-

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ister to all Moscow Catholics who also were Soviet citizens. Father Bissonnette was to take charge of non-Russian Catholics only; these were mostly members and employees of the diplomatic corps, from ambassadors to housemaids. Since the new chaplain spoke several foreign languages besides Russian, this was no problem. But he had no church, properly speaking, for conducting services. He was given a three-room apartment which was to be his living quarters, one of the rooms serving as chapel. The American chaplain was told that he was not to contact any Soviet citizen, Catholic or non-Catholic, unless practical matters induced him to do so. He had a Russian chauffeur and a Russian housekeeper, and that was all he could see at a close range of the Russian people.

But Father Bissonnette did get to see much more. When his little parish was established, with Masses, catechism, liturgical singing and a mimeographed bulletin, he was sick for a time, and then, in order to recuperate, he had the opportunity to travel. And so he eagerly set out to discover the land that lay beyond Moscow, and to meet the people he had not been allowed to contact. A traveler cannot be restricted by rules and regulations. He meets human beings on the road and in hotels; he shops, and as he shops he talks; he visits museums and schools and theaters, and makes mental notes. Father Bissonnette and a few American traveling companions covered many miles during several trips through Russia. His Chevrolet, driven by Leonia, the friendly Russian chauffeur, rolled on in the steppes and in the mountains and valleys and along the shores of the immense land. Now all Russia had become, somehow, the young priest's "parish."

He saw important Russian towns: Leningrad, Kiev, Kharkov, Poltava, Odessa. He journeyed to the Donetz Basin, to the Crimea, and much further—to Soviet Central Asia. He did not mind very much the fact that the Chevrolet was followed everywhere by a Soviet car of *Pobeda* type, carrying a group of M.V.D. agents. Neither did the

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traveler mind the hardships of so long a journey. Being sportsmanlike, dynamic, and at times quite obstinate, he bravely faced engine troubles, gasoline shortage, Soviet red tape, having to spend many nights in uncomfortable quarters or in sleeping bags. He was too busy looking around, memorizing every detail. He tells us in his book what food he was served in Kharkov (Ukrainian) and in Bokhara (Uzbek), what a native dance or theater performance is like in Central Asia, what kind of trees grow in the Northern woods or on the slopes of Southern hills.

But most of all, of course, he looked at people, and made rapid sketches of them in his mind: men and women, officials, workers, Kolkhoz peasants, tractor drivers and mechanics. Georges Bissonnette's travelogue, just like his Moscow experience, has a rare quality; he is clearly and lucidly aware of all that is negative in Soviet conditions, and yet his story is warm and human in so far as the Russian people are concerned. There is often a humorous touch, an anecdote to illustrate a point, but never an unkind word about those long-suffering men and women.

After two years of parish work and travel, Father Bissonnette was ousted from Moscow. His sudden, forced departure made headlines in the papers of free countries. But even before this sad occasion, the young chaplain had made headlines, just by telling Mr. Khrushchev exactly what he meant by freedom of conscience. His book is a fascinating account of life in a country where most freedoms are absent.

REVIEWERS

Frank Getlein is a frequent contributor to The Commonweal, *Today* and other magazines.

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